DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 373 886 PS 022 564

TITLE	Making a Quality Child Care Choice: Finding and Keeping Quality Child Care Can Be Challenging. Where Do You Start? = Choisir des services de garde de qualite: Trouver et garder des services de garde de qualite peut etre difficile. Du commencer?
INSTITUTION	Canadian Child Care Federation, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	13p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Canadian Child Care Federation, 120 Holland Avenue, Suite 306, Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0X6, Canada.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Multilingual/Bilingual Materials (171)
LANGUAGE	English; French
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Caregiver Child Relationship; Check Lists; Child Caregivers; *Day Care Centers; Early Childhood Education; *Educational Quality; Evaluation Criteria; *Family Day Care; Foreign Countries; Guidelines; Institutional Characteristics; *Parent Responsibility; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *School Choice
IDENTIFIERS	*Canada; Quality Indicators

ABSTRACT

This booklet offers Canadian parents guidance on finding high-quality child care. The booklet begins by defining quality child care, indicating that child care should support a child's emotional, social, intellectual well-being and that child caregivers are the key to quality child care. The characteristics of quality child care settings are also delineated, including a small number of children with each adult; space for quiet and active times; and a flexible, yet predictable routine. The next section focuses on finding quality care. Parents are urged to identify their needs and priorities, and to take advantage of provincial and local child care offices and community information services. Visits to potential centers and family day care homes are also recommended, and parents are urged to ask questions and discuss hours, fees, discipline, sickness, vacations, and parent involvement. In addition, parents are advised to establish a relationship with the caregiver that is one of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation; to check references; and to write a contract or letter of agreement. Finally, the booklet lists parents' other child care-related responsibilities, indicating that: (1) a three-way relationship between parent, caregiver, and child requires an ongoing commitment; (2) communication is vital; (3) parents should take the time to hear about their child's day; and (4) parents should voice both their concerns and appreciation. Booklets are in English and French. (AC)

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Making a Quality Child Care Choice

ED 373 886

PS 022564

Finding and keeping quality child care can be challenging.

Where do you start?

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Canadian Child Care Federation

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What is quality child care?

✓ **C**hild care should support a child's emotional, social, intellectual and physical well-being. Quality child care is not babysitting.

✓ **C**aregivers are key to quality child care. They should...

- understand how children grow and learn
- be affectionate and responsive, open and informative
- provide a stable and stimulating environment
- seek out community resources and support
- be willing to develop common goals.

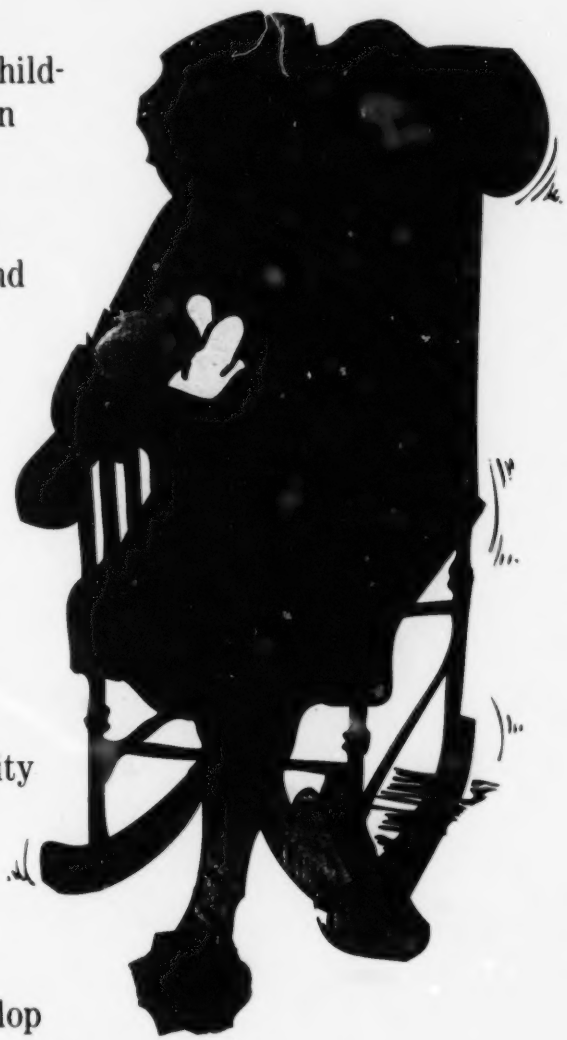

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Illustration: Chris Tripp

✓ **Q**uality child care settings have common characteristics...

- clean, safe and secure
- a caring, learning environment
- a small number of children with each adult
- space for quiet and active times, indoor and outdoor play
- a balance of interesting activities
- flexible, yet predictable daily routine
- a variety of easily available toys and equipment
- nutritional meals and snacks.

How do you find quality care?

✓ **F**irst, identify your needs and priorities.

- Consider your child's age.
- Do you have more than one child requiring care?
- Are you eligible for a government subsidy?
- What fee can you afford?
- Do you prefer centre or home based, regulated or unregulated care?
- What hours?
- In what location — near your child's school, your home, your work?

✓ **P**rovincial and local child care offices can offer guidance. Community information services can be invaluable. It is also helpful to talk to neighbours and friends who use child care. Just give yourself plenty of time and find care that suits you and your child.

✓ **O**nce you have a list of caregivers and day care centres, it is time to start telephone interviews. Jot down the questions you want to ask.

✓ **V**isiting potential centres and family day care homes is the next step.

- Look around.
- Is this a quality child care setting?
- Listen.
- Would you feel good about your child spending time here?

✓ **T**he relationship between you and the caregiver is extremely important.

- It should be one of mutual respect, trust and cooperation.
- The interview is the time to ask plenty of questions.
- Don't forget to discuss hours, fees, discipline. sickness, vacations, the involvement of parents.

✓ **C**heck references before you make a final decision. And write a contract or letter of agreement — it can save unnecessary misunderstandings in the future.

Being an effective child care parent

✓ **A** parent's responsibility does not end with finding child care.

- The three-way relationship between the parent, care-giver and child requires an ongoing commitment.
- Communication is vital.
- Take the time to hear about your child's day.
- Agree on mutual expectations.
- Voice concerns.
- Express appreciation.
- Live up to the agreement.

Stay aware.

Let's all work towards quality child care!

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Choisir des services de garde de qualité

Trouver et garder des services de garde de qualité peut être difficile.

Où commencer?

La Fédération canadienne des services de garde à l'enfance

En quoi consistent les services de garde de qualité?

✓ Les services de garde doivent appuyer le bien-être affectif, social, intellectuel et physique de l'enfant. Les services de garde de qualité ne sont pas du gardiennage.

✓ Les intervenantes en services de garde sont la clé de la garde de qualité. Elles doivent...

- comprendre comment les enfants grandissent et apprennent;
- être affectueuses et attentives, ouvertes et aptes à fournir de l'information;
- fournir un environnement stable et stimulant;
- rechercher les ressources et le soutien communautaires;
- être disposées à déterminer des buts communs.

Graphisme : DesignCo
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✓ Les services de garde de qualité ont des caractéristiques communes...

- environnement propre et sécuritaire
- milieu d'apprentissage chaleureux
- faible ratio adulte/enfants
- espaces réservés pour les périodes calmes et actives ainsi que pour les jeux intérieurs et extérieurs
- activités intéressantes et variées
- routine quotidienne flexible, mais prévisible
- jouets et équipements divers et facilement accessibles
- repas et casse-croûte nutritifs.

Comment trouver des services de garde de qualité?

✓**P**remièrement, il faut déterminer vos besoins et priorités.

- Tenez compte de l'âge de votre enfant.
- Avez-vous plus d'un enfant qui nécessite des services de garde?
- Êtes-vous admissible à une subvention gouvernementale?
- Quels frais de garde avez-vous les moyens de payer?
- Préférez-vous une garderie ou la garde en milieu familial, des services reconnus ou non reconnus?
- Quelles sont les heures de garde dont vous avez besoin?
- Où? — près de l'école de votre enfant, de votre résidence, de votre lieu de travail?

✓**L**es bureaux provinciaux et locaux de la garde à l'enfance peuvent vous fournir des conseils. Les services d'information communautaires peuvent se révéler inestimables. Il est aussi utile de parler aux voisins et aux amis qui utilisent les services de garde. Donnez-vous beaucoup de temps et trouvez les services de garde qui conviennent à vous et à votre enfant.

✓**U**ne fois que vous aurez en main la liste des intervenantes en services de garde et des garderies, il faut effectuer des entrevues téléphoniques. Notez les questions à poser.

✓**V**isitez ensuite les garderies et les services de garde en milieu familial qui vous intéressent.

- Faites le tour.
- Est-ce un milieu de garde de qualité?
- Écoutez.
- Aimeriez-vous que votre enfant y passe du temps?

✓ **L**a relation entre vous et l'intervenante en services de garde est extrêmement importante.

- Elle devrait être empreinte de respect mutuel, de confiance et de coopération.
- L'entrevue fournit l'occasion de poser beaucoup de questions.
- N'oubliez pas de parler des horaires, des frais de garde, de la discipline, des maladies, des vacances, de la participation parentale.

✓ **V**érifiez les références avant de prendre une décision finale. Rédigez aussi un contrat ou une lettre d'intention — cela peut éviter des malentendus inutiles plus tard.

Être un parent efficace pour les services de garde

✓ Les responsabilités parentales ne se limitent pas au fait de trouver des services de garde.

- La relation à trois entre le parent, l'intervenante et l'enfant exige un engagement continu.
- La communication s'impose.
- Prenez le temps d'écouter comment s'est passée la journée de votre enfant.
- Ayez des attentes similaires.
- Faites connaître vos inquiétudes.
- Exprimez votre appréciation.
- Respectez l'accord.

Soyons vigilantes.

Travaillons ensemble pour la mise en place de services de garde de qualité!

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